

LOWELL OFFERING.

JANUARY, 1845.

THANKSGIVING-DAY.

THANKSGIVING-DAY! Reader, if you are a New-Englander, you do not need to have that day described to you. The very mention of it brings a thousand pleasant remembrances brightly and warmly before you.

You remember, when you had scarcely emerged from the days of babyhood, how you listened to the proclamation duly read by the minister in the village meeting-house; and, though its general tenor was not so easily grasped by your limited comprehension, yet, to assure yourself that it was all right, how eagerly you caught and hoarded the words, "Thursday, the twenty-seventh of November next;" "Given at the Council-chamber;" "His Excellency the Governor;" and, with juvenile patriotism, you felt that you could gladly give an audible response to the closing words, "God save the Commonwealth!"

Then how you counted the days till that eventful one arrived. Perhaps if the old almanac, which used to hang by the fire-place, could be brought to light, there would still be visible, through the smoke and dust of years, sundry traces of indentures made by youthful finger-nails opposite each day in the calendar for a week or two previous. How, too, you silently noted the preparations that went on gradually in the kitchen, which soon exhibited a delightful picture, with a mountainous foreground of turkeys and plum-puddings, and vistas of pies of every hue and shape, in the perspective. And,—when you opened your eyes to the morning of *that day* which, contrary to your fears, had dawned without any mishap, after you had risen and witnessed the decapitation and amputation of fowls,

"Butchered to make a Yankee holiday,"

and seen your good mother in a delightful flurry of business,—how cheerfully you trudged along beside your venerated sire, toward the old weather-beaten meeting-house. There every body looked so calmly and gratefully good-natured, and the rustic choir tried so hard, despite the squeaking of fiddle and flute, to sing the anthem melodiously, and the gray-headed minister looked so benignly down from the pulpit, that, if you considered the matter at all, you were sure they were keeping the day in their hearts.

Ah! Thanksgiving-days *now* do not seem just as they used to;—ad-

vancing refinement brings more elegant festivities, but they lack the spirit of sober, homely pleasure which pervaded all things, "lang syne."

In these days of clairvoyance, reader, it will be nothing out of the way to transport ourselves backward, through a period of—no matter how many years—to the mansion of Uncle Zebulon Elliott, which stood on the sunny side of a little hill, in the pleasant town of Redville. It was a comfortable, ancient-looking house, but some rustivating city gentleman has by this time pulled down the little old porch, over which creepers and hops used to luxuriate, and placed a modern piazza in its stead. And, doubtless, those venerable walls, which had never suffered the approach of aught save the snow and the rain, those artists of the upper regions, are clad in a glaring coat of white paint.

But we have nothing to do with modern changes. It is Thanksgiving morning, and a cold one, too; so we will enter, *sans ceremonie*, the warm kitchen. There sits Aunt Lydia before the blazing wood fire, every thing around her as neat as wax-work; and herself, save that her face is rather more glowing than usual, seeming as easy as if this day was no more remarkable than any other. On the high-backed settee in the spacious chimney-corner, are the two boys, Isaac and Benjamin, whose duty it is alternately to "turn the spit;"—you cannot help seeing the enormous tin-kitchen stationed upon the hearth, concerning the tenant of which a conjecture may easily be formed. Farther back, in a rocking-chair by the window, sits Hannah, the "han'somest gal in Redville;" for so every body says. She has not her accustomed sewing-work, nor even her knitting, for Uncle Zeb, as they call him, will have none but *necessary* work on this day; which necessary work is included in getting and clearing away the one principal meal. She is looking dreamily out upon the glistening snow-banks; now and then a quiet smile flits across her face, and again she unconsciously looks serious. Her hair—it is

"Brown in the shadow, and gold in the sun;"

one would almost think that she was sitting there on purpose to show how well that streak of morning sunlight shades it. A word in your ear! She is to be married to-night; and her father and Parson Baldwin agree that she has chosen the very best evening in the year for her wedding. But hark! the clump of heavy boots at the door—and there is Uncle Zeb. He is a tall, gaunt man, with his whitened locks combed smoothly over his forehead, and his gray eyes looking sharply out from beneath his bushy eyebrows. Yet his face wears a benevolent expression, and you like him as soon as you hear him speak.

"Here, Isik," he says, depositing sundry articles upon the table, "do you take this ere tea and sugar and flour, and carry it down to Betsey Porter, and tell her I hope she wont be laid up with the rheumatis' another Thanksgivin'. And, Ben, do you carry these ere couple o' pair of shoes over to Widder Green's, and them chickens too, and tell her that I shall calc'late to see the children to meet'n' to-day." Here Aunt Lydia rises, and a nice pie, and a quart or two of new milk is added to each budget, when the boys are sent off with a charge from Uncle Zeb: "Mind, I say, be quick!—and none of your stoppin' to play on the road, for this day is sot apart for praise and worship." Then, lowering his voice, as if soliloquizing, "What we have aint our'n—it's the LORD's; and these poor cre'ters aint beholden to us for HIS bounty; they've as good a right to it

as we." Now he approaches the fire, and spreading out his huge hands to warm them, "Come, Hannah!" he says, "come and 'ficiate for the boys: your ma'am's tired, and you'd better help her till meet'n' time."

See how quick Hannah starts, as if from a dream, and hastens to her post. "O yes, father; and I'll stay at home and finish getting dinner, and mother can go to meeting with you."

"Now, did ye ever! I *should* laugh!" ejaculates Aunt Lydia.

"But, mother, you'll want me at home to help you, if you don't go; for sister Jane is coming with the children, and they'll be round in the way, and—and—"

"And why don't you speak right out and say you don't want to go, 'cause it's your weddin' day, and you're afeard folks'll be a noticin' you," says Uncle Zeb. "That's what you *think*; but do dear be independent, and not mind 'em. Gettin' married aint nothin' to be ashamed of—you know 'taint. It's a Bible ordinance. This ere's a day of *public* thanks, and how's any body goin' to know you're thankful, without you show it by goin' to meetin'. You *must* go, Hannah."

Hannah knows that her father's word is as unvarying as the laws of the Medes and Persians, and so, though crying almost, she equips herself in her "go-to-meeting" habiliments, and is ready to accompany her father and brothers at their return. Poor Hannah! we will only just for a moment add ours to the eyes which are fixed upon her as she enters the family pew, and which she fancies remain thus fixed, though she dares not cast a glance toward the inquisitive-looking old ladies in the opposite pew, nor to the row of grown-up boys in the front seat of the gallery; but she cannot help seeing,—and with all her reverence for the place, she is very near laughing at the sight,—a ragged urchin, who, with his fat double chin resting on the top of the railed seat, and his face turned toward her, fixes his round staring blue eyes first upon her, and then in the direction in which she knows that Asa Williams, her husband in prospect, is seated.

His eyes are fixed most perseveringly upon the minister; and you would not suppose him conscious of the presence of another person.

By the time service is ended, and all are safe at home, Aunt Lydia has arranged the table of feasting. Rather earlier than it is customary to dine on this day, but every thing must be cleared away and "slicked up" for the wedding. There they are all seated at the festive board;—the burden under which it groans it were vain to describe; and then every body knows what a Thanksgiving dinner is. But there they are: Uncle Zeb and Aunt Lydia, Hannah and the boys, Jane, with her husband and little ones, and an old-maid aunt. Asa is not present, for his mother wishes him to be with his brothers and sisters to-day, as it is the last time; and next year he expects to keep Thanksgiving in his own house.

Well, Uncle Zeb has devoutly "asked the blessing," and is doing his best to inspire the little circle around him with the gratitude which he feels himself. Let us listen.

"Our forefathers had to endure trials and persecution, and nobody knows what; but they trusted in the ALMIGHTY, and HE preserved 'em, and their children after 'em, 'cordin' to His promise; and now here we're a reapin' what they sowed. But I'm afeared we haint half so much thankfulness in our sperits as they had, for all we've got so much more to be thankful for."

All present seem silently to acquiesce in this: but one of the grandchildren asks, "Who were our forefathers, grandsir?"

"Hush, Tommy," lisps his little sister, "don't you know? Adam and Eve, and Cain and Abel, they're the four fathers, for the Bible says they're the first that ever was."

Uncle Zeb cannot refrain from joining in the laugh at the little maiden's expense, while he gravely asserts that she'll be wiser one of these days, "afore she gets to be a woman."

Now the "men folks" are beginning to talk of "what an *awful* sight of apples Neighbor Somebody had," and how "the grandest lot of corn has been raised this year—and *sech* smashin' pumpkins you never did see." Aunt Lydia quietly remarks that it does seem as though we'd *ort* to be thankful when Providence is *so* good," and the sentiment is responded to by all, as they rise from this "feast of fat things."

It is evening. Shall we go to the wedding? Ah, yes! to be sure! The best "fore room," with its bright yellow floor partly covered with curiously shaped mats of Aunt Lydia's own braiding, is filled to overflowing with uncles, aunts and cousins: so we shall be obliged to take a seat with the boys on the stairs in the front entry. There! Asa and Hannah have come! She, as blushing as a rose-bud, and trembling like a dew-drop, stands between her stalwart bridegroom and bouncing red-cheeked bridemaid. The ceremony is concise enough, and the twain are quickly made one. Heaping plates of wedding-cake now make their appearance, with frosting that for whiteness can only be compared with the bride's own brow, and which her own hands have helped to make; with it, an indispensable accompaniment in these days, some bountiful slices of Aunt Lydia's cheese; and then sweet wine for a beverage, for the sun of total abstinence had not yet reached its meridian.

The company at first are very staid and demure; but by and by Hannah's harum-scarum cousin Ned, impatient for a frolic, thumps his next neighbor, whose face is turned from him, with his elbow, whispering, "Is the minister gone?" "Well, I can't say as I've seen him go," is answered; and poor Ned recognizes the voice, and catches a side glance at the face of Parson Baldwin himself, as he sinks back, abashed, into the crowd.

But now the minister is really gone, and a voice full of roguery is heard calling across the room, "Here, Hannah,—Mrs. Williams, I mean,—come here a minute."

Hannah rises, and a general rush instantly ensues among the young spinsters, for the seat she has vacated. Whoever is so lucky as to reach it, may be sure that she will be the next bride herself. Soon the merriment deepens; every one has a joke to pass, or a bright speech to make; and Uncle Zeb sits comfortably in his arm-chair, making neither interruption nor opposition; for he says, "Young folks must sow their wild oats sometime."

Time passes so cheerily, that before you think of it, it is nine o'clock, and the jingling of bells is heard at the door; and there is the horse and sleigh all ready and waiting to carry the new-married couple to their new house, about a mile from Uncle Zeb's. Two or three pairs of cousins volunteer to go "a piece" with them; Hannah is at the door, all muffled for the ride; we hear Uncle Zeb saying, "There, good-by!—be a good gal, and mind your husband; and do you, Asa, take good care on her. But, Hannah, do be still a makin' b'lieve cry; how silly you be;" while, as he turns back into the house, you see a tear twinkling in the corner of

his own eye, which he brushes off, exclaiming, "How bad the snow does blow to-night." Aunt Lydia does not try to hide her grief at the loss of her child—. But lo! while we gaze, the spell is broken—the vision melted away! It is again November, 1844. But a day or two before Thanksgiving, and no sparkling snow or ice in the moonbeams,—no prospect of sleighing or sliding, or any old-fashioned amusements! O mother Nature! thou thyself art making innovations upon Thanksgiving-day!

JENNY.

THE HEATHEN WIFE.

They answered and said unto Ezra, "We have trespassed against our God, and have taken strange wives of the people of the land; yet now there is hope in Israel concerning this thing. Now, therefore, let us make a covenant with our God to put away all the wives, and such as are born of them, according to the counsel of my lord, and of those that tremble at the commandment of our God; and let it be done according to the law."

MEENA.

AND now the evening's light, like garment pale,
Hangs o'er Jerusalem. The arching heavens,
Without one cloud to break the stern deep blue,
Enclose the scene; as though, its pure embrace
Within, it held a purer earth than skies
Of distant lands e'er look upon. That moon afar—
See how, like a thin burnished shred of clouds
Once there, she in the ether hangs—as she
Were but a lone and modest guest in that
Far sky, and gives to us her placid smile
That Earth may holier if not brighter seem.
The breezes now sing pensively their hymn
To the hushed earth, and Jordan's waves send back
A murmur of response. Save these I hear
No sound but breathings faint of my hushed babe.
I wish the boy would wake, for e'en his cries
To still were better far than here to sit
So fearfully alone. This is, mayhap,
As I have often heard, a sacred land;
But ah, to me its holiness is gloom;
Its temple is a place for awe and fear;
Its priests are solemn men, whose glances fierce
Strike in my soul deep dread. Those, too, whom once
I pitied much, and cheered and smiled upon,
The daughters of the land, look on me cold
And proud; not as mine eye fell then on theirs
When strangers they in a strange far-off land.
Yet this would nothing be were Hanan's eye
The same, his tones unchanged, his love as firm
And strong as when he poured, by Babel's streams,
Upon my ever-willing ear, those hopes
And fears and vows which then were love.

'Tis gone—

Oh, no, it is not gone, that cherished love.
My heart still riseth up, and pleads for his,
Whene'er a doubt intrudes. Yet passing strange

It seems that he so often now doth leave
 My side, nor telleth e'er why thus away;
 And seems as pained whene'er I speak of this.
 Why may I not his trouble share? Ah me!
 There have been new-born thoughts my soul within,
 On which I would not look; and whose faint cry
 I stifled quick. They tell me that—But here
 He comes, and now himself shall tell me all.

HANAN.

Meena—at this late hour—in this lone spot!
 Why here? I bade thee wait me not. Thy couch
 Hath long awaited thee. The shadows fall
 Upon thine eyes, and their bright lustre veil.
 The hues of eventide with thy cheek's glow
 Now darkly blend, and hide from me, from all,
 Thy loveliness. Now to thy couch—for though
 Thou beauty hast, and grace, yet both increase
 With day's bright beams, and I will look on thee,
 And on thy babe, with morrow's dawn.

MEENA.

Hanan!

On me, and on my babe, why not now look?
 From us why turn? But I to thee must speak
 Ere my couch greeteth me, and thou must hear,
 And thou must speak to me of that thy heart
 Within that lieth hid. The light fond words
 I heard but now are not the ones which press,
 In thy full heart, for utterance first.
 At times like this the lightest words weigh down
 Upon my soul more than the heaviest may.
 Now tell me, in this midnight hour, with stars
 Hung brightening o'er us both, and moonlight calm
 In all the air, o'er all the earth, and here
 Our babe in happy sleep upon my knee—
 Now tell me solemn words, such as my love,
 Earnest and fond and true, hath merited
 From thee.

HANAN.

Meena; affection, such as thine,
 So constant, pure and deep, should win for thee
 Love in return such as I may not give.
 A husband is not all I've been to thee,
 But thy divinity, thy god. Such love
 I might not e'er return, except with one
 Which would be falsehood to my God. I may
 Not now be true to Him and thee. Meena;
 With falsehood to my God I too am false
 To self and thee. With truth to Him I still
 Am true to all on earth. From me shrink not;
 But let thy true love be thy strength.
 In wedding thee I sinned; but to persist
 In wrong can ne'er repair the fault. And now—
 Amidst the jubilee we shout, the praise
 We sing for Israel's deliverance—
 Ascend the notes of lamentation deep
 In that we turned aside from Moses' law,
 And Abraham's God. We sing hosannas loud
 That we from bondage now are free, but we
 Repent with prayer and sacrifice for sins
 Like this, and earnestly beseech that He

Will turn aside His wrath, His vengeance spare,
 Though we have sinned so fearfully this once ;
 Though we have taken aliens to our sides,
 And heathen wives unto our hearts. Meena !
 'Twas cruelty to thee in that thy love
 I wooed, yet not a meditated wrong.
 When we were taken captives to thy land
 There was a death of hopes—high hopes, that thou
 Canst ne'er conceive. We by our God were now
 Forsook ; our land no longer ours ; our homes
 To strangers all were given—Jerusalem
 Sat like a widow desolate, in tears.
 Then Zion mourned upon her holy hill—
 We midst the Gentiles dwelt—strangers our lords.
 And yet we lived—on us the morning dawned ;
 The bright sun rose, and set, and rose again.
 Night came with darkness wished, and then away
 It passed. We lived—but still to us no life
 Was in our life, for hope and joy were dead.
 'Twas then I first met thee : I was alone.
 There was no one to wish me joy, or strive
 To share my woes. The daughters of our race—
 They sat them down by Babel's streams and wept ;
 Their harps upon the willows hung ; their songs
 Of praise were mute. Their countenances sad
 I could not look upon. Yes, then I saw
 Thee first. Thy face was bright with hope ;
 And when thy smile upon the captive fell,
 'Twas bright as morn to him. Sadness at times
 Was on thy brow ; but only when from mine
 A shadow darkly passed, and rested there.
 But then how soon 'twas light and peace again !
 The floweret frail looks upward to the sun—
 And the bruised reptile seeks the softest moss—
 The heart-pierced bird flies to his downy nest—
 The wounded beast hies to the thicket's shade.
 Thus sought I thee ; my heart was never thine—
 'Twas in Jerusalem ; and in the void
 It left was never love, but thy affection there
 Was as a roseate veil hung o'er a recess dark,
 And how I prized that beauteous shroud. With thee,
 As in a fitful dream, passed life awhile—
 And then I woke. Awoke to find that God,
 Our Great and Holy God, still cared for us ;
 That HE would turn to us, if we would but
 Return to HIM—that all past promised joys,
 And blessings great, should be vouchsafed to us,
 If we His law would still obey, and still
 JEHOVAH GOD would worship and adore.
 But HE a sacrifice will ne'er accept
 From hands unclean, or hearts untrue.
 His last commandment we must all obey—
 All who in this have sinned, and wed strange wives,
 And in this thing have sinfully forgot
 The daughters of Jerusalem. This day
 We all have met, confessed our wrong, and sworn
 To put from us what in His sacred eye
 Is an abomination foul.

MEENA.

This was the thought I would not think ;
 The fear I would not dread ; the ill I hoped
 Against so long. The mystery is solved.
 And yet it was not this ; for he, who thus

Can speak, Hanan, is surely never thee.
 Thy words upon mine ear have fallen now,
 And yet I do not take their import strange.
 Husband! I dream that thou hast been unkind.
 Forgive; for oh, I struggle 'gainst the dream.
 Speak, love; and break this spell. Support me—I am stunned—
 'Twill soon be o'er, and I will smile on thee,
 And dissipate thy gloom; yes, here, in thine
 Own land, how happy we will be.

Yet, no!

'Tis not a dream. She who upon thy breast
 Her head hast laid is now "*strange wife*"—her love
 An unclean thing, her words "*abomination foul*."
 And thou hast *never* loved—but 'twas well feigned,
 Or I was very weak. You sought a bride
 As the worn traveller takes a cordial cup;
 Or he who fain would sleep an opiate;
 Or as the Bacchanalian seeks his wine,
 And drew affections forth, as bright skies win,
 The new-fledged birds, to send them back, as soiled
 And wounded things, to the heart's home; now left,
 By the rude storm o'erswept, so desolate.
 My love for you went forth as morning prayer,
 E'en in departure bringing purity;
 And while its memory will ever live
 Within my heart, giving each word its tone,
 Each look its woe, each dream, by night or day,
 The all of which our dreams are ever made,
 'Twill nothing be to thee. Full well I know
 'Twill be my thought at morn, my word at noon,
 And aye at eve my meditation be.
 Mem'ry, with thee, will be but that o'er which
 To reign triumphantly; yes, to exult
 As when beneath thy feet a scorpion
 Lies crushed. Hanan! if thy great fearful God
 Demands of thee a purer holier love
 Than that which erst has blest our lives—
 If He has that for thee, which better is
 Than to make happy those, whose happiness
 Upon thy love and kindly deeds depends,
 Then art thou now forgiven by that God.
 I to gentler shrine will now return.
 But ah! I ne'er can kneel as I have knelt.
 I ne'er, until I gave my heart to thee,
 But happiness had known. Then first my soul
 Felt sadness, like soft shadows o'er it steal,
 And learned to love the fascinating gloom.
 Kind deeds, like summer showers, upon thy race
 Were poured by me, and mine. Thou hadst still more.
 Thy lofty grief my heart impressed with sense
 Of high and rarest worth. For thy sad lot
 I mourned—such pity is akin to love.
 Thy converse gave my admiration won;
 And soon in thee I worshipped all my heart
 Had pictured forth as good, and great, and pure.
 When on me fell the shadow of thy grief
 It changed to light within my heart.
 And then, as time passed on, to think my voice
 Alone was music to thine ear—that step
 Of mine was waited for—and my least glance
 Was to thy heart as sunshine on the stream.
 To know I linked my fate with one as dark
 As thine was my first grief; my first true joy.

Thou knowest that mine was e'er a happy lot
 In that first home—how I was loved, admired,
 Caressed, and guarded tenderly. My heart
 Was sought by lovers true, of mine own race,
 And sought in vain. My love for them was like
 Some merry bird, which from its nest, in green
 And fragrant bowers, may not be wooed—but still
 Amidst its blossoms sings, and flutters o'er
 The hands that vainly to imprison strive.
 My love for thee was like that gentle dove
 Of which I've heard thee speak; which left the ark
 So long its sheltering home, and forth it went
 O'er wild and stormy waves. At first a leaf,
 An olive branch, it plucked; and, on its stem,
 A promise bright it saw in embryo there.
 Full soon the happy bird saw mountain heights,
 Then forest tops, then hills, and plains, and then
 The waters all had passed away, and earth
 Again was beautiful and bright and new.
 The bird has built her nest; and a sweet one,
 A tender fledgling there, has centred all
 The mother's heart within that little spot.
 Shall waves of bitterness that world o'erflow,
 And that creation new a flood destroy?

HANAN.

Nay, nay, not so! the boy is all thine own—
 We both have watched with joy his little limbs
 Expand—have waited his first smile—outvied
 Each other in caresses fond, and we
 Have triumphed in his infantile exploits.
 Now he is thine—all thine!—take, take him hence;
 Let him love thee, and only thee! and thou
 For us shalt love and guard and cherish him.

MEENA.

The child is mine—there is then in my night
 One star, and oh, how bright—in Life's wild waste
 One sparkling stream—one verdant spot within
 A desert track. Must I now give to him
 The all of love I've felt for him and thee?
 Then do I fear that I may love too well.
 Affection, such as mine, must be to him
 Like offerings heaped upon an altar frail.
 May they not crush the shrine. He's like a bough,
 A slender withe, o'er which luxuriantly
 A vine has thrown its weight of tendrils soft,
 And clustering fruit. May they not break the stem.
 Or like a harp, o'er which uneasy fingers pass,
 With restless constant sweep. May they not mar
 The tones, or break the strings. My boy! my boy!
 From my excess of love mayst thou no sufferer be.
 But to be wholly mine, and all that's mine—
 Yet *I am not deceived*. Hanan; for this
 I thank the heathen blood that in these veins
 Courses its way, not *thee*. And did thy God require
 That this child's blood should feed his altar fire,
 These limbs upon a gory shrine would soon be laid,
 And I by thee a childless widow made.
 Farewell!

HANAN.

Turn not away, my wife!—the night is dark,
 And now 'tis surely time to seek thy rest:
 Let's to our home and couch.

MEENA.

Our home! our couch!

Nay, I am not thy wife! I am divorced;
And oh; the deed is thine. Ne'er at thy side
Again may I seek rest—I wish not sleep—
Israel may sleep, and dream bright gladsome dreams;
But not a Persian wife or mother here
Should close an eye this night. I go from thee,
To those who now are partners in my grief.
Nay, touch me not—not one embrace—but thou
Mayst kiss the boy—there, gently, on his brow;
And where thy lips in this embrace shall rest,
There, too, in coming time shall mine be pressed.
Hanan, again farewell!

HANAN.

Yes, she is gone!

Of all I swore to do I have not spared—
GOD OF MY FATHERS! I have yielded all
A sacrifice to thee. Bless THOU the deed.
On me, and all who with me greatly sinned,
And have with me repented of their guilt,
Pour THY rich blessings down. Let thine eyes look
With favor on thy servants here, and smile
Upon Jerusalem. Oh let her glory shine
Unto the farthest lands; and people of all climes
Fear us, and also serve and worship THEE.
And on THY servant, LORD, who now before
THEE kneels in humble penitence, look down.
Look graciously, Great God! May all my sins
Forgotten be, and blotted from THY book.
Bless her, whom as a partner I shall I take—
One now who as her GOD will worship THEE.
May she like Rachel loved and lovely be;
Like Leah mother of a household band,
As many olive plants around our home.
And from my loins may promised Shiloh come,
To whom all nations, at some future time,
Shall gathered be. Let Him, King of all kings,
Lord of all earthly lords, Messiah he,
Of thy long-chosen race, thy Israel—
GOD OF MY FATHERS! let me parent be
Of Him, Immanuel, the Holy One—
But what! Meena! hast thou returned?

MEENA.

I left thee in an angry mood, or one
I justly feared might seem as such to thee.
I know not well what I should think or speak.
But I would e'er be kind, nor leave with thee
The memory of bitter parting words.

I looked behind

And saw thee on thy knees in earnest prayer,
My heart quick told me this, that thou didst plead
For me and mine—for strength to bear this stroke
And blessings on our lot. Unjust to thee
I will not ever be; and will, methink,
That e'en in this thou hast been true to HIM
Whom thou hast worshipped e'er—true to thyself,
The Israelite I loved. And I will still
Be true—true to myself, our boy, and thee.
No; I will not be sad—not when this stroke,

In its first bitterness and pain is o'er.
 Yes, I will learn to smile upon my boy,
 And I will tell him of his father's God,
 Of Abraham's faith, and Moses's rites and law,
 Of all which I have learned in life with thee;
 And if it meet his heart, as it has ne'er
 Met mine, and he shall come to worship here,
 And kneel beside the children of thy wife,
 Thy blessed and happier wife—then lay thine hand
 Upon his head, and from a father's lips
 Let a rich blessing sink into his heart,
 And think, think kindly once, of her who then
 Will be no more.

ELLA.

IMPROVEMENT CIRCLE.

WHEN anything transpires out of the common course of events, or any new idea is brought before the world, it is generally ascribed to some master spirit, or considered as the workings of a mind of more than ordinary intelligence; when, would we trace the stream to its source, we might find it to originate among persons unknown to fame, and whose names had never been enrolled upon history's page, but who lived unnoticed and unknown, unconscious even of themselves that the world were any wiser for their having lived in it.

On one of the corporations of this city, about eight years ago, might have been seen, on a summer evening, a company of four or five young females, who through the day had labored at their several employments in some one of the factories connected with the corporation. Perhaps they were not ambitious above others of their sex; the blast of fame had never been sounded in their ears, for was not theirs a life of toil? But, wishing to improve the few talents God had given them, they proposed the formation of a society of young ladies for mutual improvement. An evening was appointed for the proposed purpose; and having invited a few others to join them, they met at the time appointed. They, who think that in a woman's tongue they have found perpetual motion, would, had they been present at our first meeting, have immediately given up that theory. Each waited for the other, till it seemed as if the evening would pass away without any advances being made towards the object of their meeting. But the silence was after a long time broken, and then business proceeded more rapidly. A president, vice president, and secretary were chosen, a constitution drafted, and by-laws formed, to which each of the members affixed their names. Well do I remember our first regular meeting. The scene is as plain before me as if it had been enacted but yesterday. It was opened by an address from one of the members; one who has since added much to the interest of the Offering, and who is still one of its ablest contributors. Between two of the young ladies a correspondence was held; another gave an account of a visit to the home of her childhood, and in a very touching manner recounted the changes that had taken place in the home of her youth. A dream was the subject of another communication; and one whose organ of mirthfulness was pretty largely developed, gave

us an amusing description of our first business meeting. For my own humble self, this was my first initiatory lesson into the mysteries of composition; and well do I remember my first efforts. After much study and thought I concluded to write "A FRAGMENT;" and *a fragment* truly it was. I had always looked upon the art of composition as suited only to the capacity of great minds, and deemed not that my own humble powers would ever be called in requisition for such an object. But the evening passed away pleasantly and profitably to all.

Such is the history of our first meeting. Years passed away, and we had still a habitation and a name, although in a place like this where constant changes are taking place, it could not be expected that we had always the same members. At length a circle on a more extensive scale was formed by a gentleman of this city, and a plan conceived of bringing before the world the productions of inexperienced females; of showing that intellect and intelligence might be found even among factory operatives. It was then the Offering was published, and many of those who were present at the first meeting of our Improvement Circle were contributors to its pages. That little band is now scattered. Five of them have entered upon the sober realities of life—the married state. She, who wrote "A visit to the home of my childhood," has found a home where no change dwells—a home in heaven. Of the two that remain one is now a resident of the "city of spindles," and is still wielding her pen in behalf of literature and science; the other is myself. I shall therefore be excused from giving my own history. We may learn from this not to despise the day of small things. M—.

KINDNESS.

"All cannot be greatest, but all can be kind."

"Speak kindly to thy fellow man,
Lest he should die while yet
Thy bitter accents wring his heart,
And make his pale cheek wet."

SPEAK kindly to thy brother man, for he has many cares thou dost not know; many sorrows thine eye hast not seen; and grief may be gnawing at his heart-strings, which ere long will snap them in sunder. O, speak kindly to him! Perhaps a word from thee will kindle the light of joy in his o'ershadowed heart, and make his pathway to the tomb a pleasant one. Speak kindly to thy brother man, even though sin has marred the spirit's beauty, and turned into discord the once perfect harmony of his being. Harshness can never reclaim him. Kindness will. For far down, beneath all his depravity, there still lingers a spark of the spirit's loveliness, that one word from thee may kindle to a flame, which will eventually purify the whole man, and make him what he was designed to be, the true spiritual image of his God. Speak kindly, act kindly, to all, without asking who it may be. It is enough for thee to know that he belongs to the common brotherhood of man, and needs thy sympathy. Then, give it to him freely!—ay, freely as thy FATHER, who is in Heaven, giveth to thee.

J. L. B.

TRUTH'S PILGRIMAGE.

CHAPTER IV.

SUFFERING by his separation from those who by kindness had won his deepest sympathies—lacerated by the prudence, prejudice and injustice which had severed him from one who had made earth almost a Heaven, Truth bowed with a chastened spirit to the WILL which still propelled him forward, a wanderer among strangers. Like the dove sent forth upon the wild waste of waters, he neither found the olive leaf of promise, nor was yet permitted to return to the Ark of Peace, from whence he had departed.

The ship, in which he embarked, was wafted, without storm or detention, to the port of its destination. No cannon, nor display of rejoicing, heralded his approach in the harbor, nor proclaimed the noble visitor's landing upon the shores of America. As he had approached and landed at Rome upon the day of a religious festival, so his arrival in America chanced to be the eve before a warmly canvassed election of one of its rulers was to take place. Weary of his long confinement within the narrow boundary of the vessel, he disembarked immediately, although it was evening before the ship gained its moorings.

He had passed through one street, and was turning into the second, when his attention was arrested by the passage of a long and brilliantly lighted procession, bearing in its ranks banners, devices and emblems. He paused by an illuminated arch in simple bewilderment at its meaning. To him it was more problematical than significant.

He who in every act of his existence recognized the ONE CAUSE OMNIPOTENT, might well pause where every emblem, each insignia, was but expressive of the animal man. The beasts of the forest, the birds of the air, and the trees which had given them shelter, were duly represented. Old Ocean had sent his mimic ship and miniature sailors, and perchance *sharks* might have been there, dressed in broadcloth and beavers. The husbandman in his pent-up cart busily swung his flail; while in another the tailor plied his needle. The tinker soldered broken wares, and the smith beat iron into ploughshares. The house-builder reared his mimic edifice; and the shoemaker industriously continued his occupation. The latter was busily plying his press-iron, and the currier finishing the process of curing leather. The merchant exhibited his wares, and the printer was setting his types. Every grade, trade and profession was duly represented, either literally or emblematically, save those three which are termed the "learned" professions. No minister from the pulpit inculcated the lessons of love, faith and duty; no lawyer was at the bar advocating the cause of justice, or the supremacy of the laws; and no doctor was lecturing upon the rules of health, nor exhibiting the impressive wonders of physical organization. It was a pageantry to minister to the senses, not the reason; to incite the passions, not enlist the judgment; to excite admiration for the novel and wonderful, as the nurse exhibits the rocking-horse to the baby-man to purchase his obedience.

As each phalanx, triumphal car, and emblem, passed under the arch where Truth stood spell bound, the old men cried, "Three cheers for ———!" And the little boys, with the rest of the multitude, flung up their hats, and shouted, "Hurra! hurra! hurra!"

A tall and slender tree, with graceful foliage, was supported upright in one of the cars, and was greeted as it passed with enthusiastic, and almost frantic, rejoicing and cheering. Truth immediately conjectured this to be some new and very valuable species of vegetable not incidental to the climate, but transported hither from distant and more favored regions, and the cultivation of which would contribute very essentially to the well-being of humanity.

"What is it?" he asked of a by-stander.

"What?" returned the man whom he had interrogated.

"The tree," replied Truth, pointing towards it.

"You must be green," answered the man, "to speak the language and wear the coat you do, and ask what a 'hickory pole' is."

Truth was prevented from further exposure of his ignorance by the tremendous shouts of "log-cabins and hard cider forever!" and he saw round the turning of the street, a small house composed of the bodies of small trees laid one upon another, and grooved at the ends to fasten them and form the angle. At the door was a small animal hung up in a cage, and beneath it rested a small barrel with a tin cup tied to the spigot. The din of the cheering as this passed was deafening.

Immediately after the tree, Truth had caught the glimpse of a full-length portrait of a commanding but venerable-looking man, dressed in the uniform of an officer, borne high aloft as if the presiding genius of the throng. And again, immediately in the rear of the cabin, there was another full-length portrait of a noble but younger-looking man in a military uniform, as highly and proudly reared as if to dispute or divide the palm of victory with his predecessor. A word in explanation of the seeming incongruity of the heroes of the procession. We well know that the opposing candidate of him whose insignia in that election was a "log cabin," was not entitled to a military officer's uniform, although he might have claimed the device of the "hickory tree." But as both of the two great political parties celebrated that evening their hopes for the morrow, in *that* city, either by accident or design the one crossed the line of march of the other, and as the only turning in that street was already filled by the party who had come from the opposite direction, and reached the corner first, the other, to prevent a confusion and collision, quietly fell into the rear of the rival procession. The marshals of the first procession, amused that their enemy should attack them in the rear, sent the proud towering insignia of their party, with the likeness of him who had always commanded success, to oppose the front advance of their foe, while their candidate led the van of their own forces. The quiet good-natured insinuation of this manœuvre was well understood by the multitude, and received with loud huzzas, to which even their rivals were almost disposed to respond. *Military* glory has a fascination for the American populace, which almost amounts to a monomania. The hero of a successful battle possesses a charm with which it is vain for a mere civilian to contend. The question they do not make one of mere talents or superiority; but for success, a chivalrous enthusiasm is excited in the public mind; and then "hurra" for the favorite candidate. We do not refer to the military glory of these two (whom, without names, every American will recognize,) as a disparagement to their worth or fitness for that office for which both were successful candidates, as both were favorites with us. But it is vain for even their warmest friends to deny that the enchantment which their military spirit threw

around them, was a stronger magnet to attract popular favor than even their great and acknowledged worth. The populace worship the demi-god who wears the glittering trappings of gaudy show; they adore him who has bravely exposed his person and life in defence of their rights; and more because he has *defeated* and brought shame to their common foe, than for the protection he has yielded to their own fireside.

"Undoubtedly," said Truth, musingly, "these men were the saviors of their country; but why is the God of battles, and the Strength of the arm of the just forgotten?"

"I guess you *forget*, mister, that this is a political, not a religious, procession," answered a by-stander at his elbow.

"And do not the fundamental principles of your government recognize the RULER OF THE UNIVERSE?" continued Truth.

"To be sure, mister," rejoined the man, "but we are not such heathen as to mix our religion with politics."

"What?" responded Truth, quickly, "is the altar, the emblem of daily acknowledgment, of dependence upon JEHOVAH, always excluded your civic processions?"

"Why, no, mister; you will see them exhibited in the gala processions of the Sunday schools. *They* have altars and crosses, and all that sort of thing. That," continued he, exultingly pointing to the American flag, "is our nation's emblem, and I rather think you'll find its stripes and stars pretty well known; and these which follow it, are the *insignia* of the different states, and what they have upon their great seals, with which the governors bind the states' contracts and finish the states' laws."

The procession moved on, and our stranger eagerly scanned each motto and device. When the last had passed, a shade of disappointed expectation shadowed his countenance. "And not even the symbol of Him who died to ransom the transgressor from his transgressions."

"Why, mister, you would not have us carry an altar, cross and meeting-house in our military and political parades, would you?" interrupted his loquacious neighbor, interrogatively.

"Where every thing in earth is represented I would not have HIM who created it forgotten—the symbol of Him whose life was an offering to give life to those who 'were dead in trespasses and sins.'"

"I guess, mister," responded the man, "that you are a Roman Catholic—they are fond enough of all such images and signs. But one sect don't rule this country; our religion is free; we all worship God as we please in our meeting-houses; but, as I said before, we don't mix our religion with our politics, as they do in Catholic countries."

"What," said Truth, in a sorrowful tone, as he turned to pursue the direction pointed out to him as the way to the hotel where his baggage was to be sent, "is even the emblem of the sufferings of the Redeemer of mankind *sectarian in this country!*"

The next morning, at an early hour, Truth arose, and after performing his orisons and toilette, went forth to view by morning light the novelties of the city where he had landed. Upon his return, some two hours after, as he was ascending the steps of the hotel, a ragged urchin pressed forward with—

"Have a 'Sun,' sir?"

"Thank you," replied Truth, receiving the daily sheet thrust into his hands, with astonishment at the little fellow's courtesy.

"And here's the 'Times,' the 'Express,' the 'Advertiser,' the 'Patriot,' the 'Journal,' the 'Post,' the 'Morning News'—have 'em, sir?" continued the urchin, running over the list of his paper wares.

"Thank you—thank you, my little man," returned Truth, more and more surprised at the boy's generosity and forethought in supplying him with the latest news. He turned to enter the hotel.

"But stop, sir," said the boy, interrupting the movement, "you have not paid me—it is thirty-one cents."

Before Truth could reply, one of the waiters who stood behind him, aware of his recent arrival in the country, and his probable want of the small currency, stepped forward: "If you please, sir," said he, "they will pay the boy at the bar; and you will also find any paper which you may wish to see in the reading-room."

Truth bowed his acquiescence and went to his chamber to seek the bias of the new country, now his refuge and the area of his efforts. Keen was the pang of agony which thrilled his bosom as he learned, from the first sheet which he perused, that the refuge of the oppressed, and the home of the free, was in immediate danger; that one portion of its sons, by fostering misrule, sacrificing honor, truth and independence to the claims of party and the dictation of demagogues, were also sacrificing their country's best interests, and its last hope of salvation from disorder, confusion and dissolution; that the candidate for its highest office, was but the low, intriguing, aspiring leader of those who would sacrifice their country's freedom and independence to foreign dictation and party faction.

With a heart saddened by the thought that the last effort of humanity to assert its "inalienable rights," should be so soon destroyed, through the selfishness and ambition of those who would sell their birthright of freedom for "a mess of pottage," he took up another sheet, and in that found the same leader lauded in the highest terms as the most patriotic, philanthropic, enlightened and exalted of modern statesmen, and his rival (who in the first paper had been described in the most laudatory manner that language was capable of expressing,) denounced as weak and imbecile, the mere tool of a few leading men of his party, who made him their "cat's-paw to pull *their* roasted chestnuts from the fire." A third paper condemned both the men and measures of the two popular parties, and appealed to all lovers of their kind, to all good and true men, and to the gentle but all-pervading influence of woman to save their country from the ruin of its own laws and institutions, and from the vengeance of HIM who "spared not the cities of the plain" from the penalty that their transgressions and iniquities had brought upon them.

Truth was not wont to be suspicious; but the unmeasured and unqualified abuse bestowed by each editor upon the candidate whom he opposed, and the hyperbole of praise and adulation with which he canvassed the merits and claims of his favorite, created a doubt in the mind of our simple wanderer of the authenticity of either the praise or blame thus lavishly conferred. A quiet smile displaced the shade of anxiety which had shadowed his brow while he read. "Ah," said he, "it would be well if even political editors would remember that—

'Lest men suspect the tale untrue,
Keep *probability* in view.'

He had passed several days in his excellent lodgings, missing none of

the comforts which had contributed to his repose in the aristocratic household from whence he had been banished, save that of quietness. The hurry, the constant passing through the halls, and the decided and audible closing of the doors, at first annoyed and constantly reminded him of the elegant but unostentatious abode which had so long been his home. Still, unbiased by the prejudices of that refinement which make these annoyances the actual evils of life, he soon became accustomed to the daily routine of bustle and hurry, *perhaps* inseparable from these large establishments for public accommodation. If the advertisements of this and similar houses are to be received as announcements of positive facts, he was "served like a gentleman, and lived like a prince."

It will be remembered that, when he left his noble patron, he, in his simplicity, refused the pecuniary aid which the nobleman had proffered as an expression of his esteem.

During his residence in England the delicacy of consideration which had supplied his every want had left him ignorant of both the value and necessity of that "universal equivalent" for almost every earthly good, as well as for commodities of barter and exchange—*money*.

His previous experience in earth had been equally unfortunate in giving him knowledge of its actual utility; and it was with unfeigned surprise that, about two weeks after his arrival at the hotel, he received a princely bill sent him by the landlord in account for his "princely fare," with a modest request for its "immediate payment." The bill was in proportion to the extra entertainment which he had received as the friend of the Right Honorable Lord B——, of which fact the captain of the packet in which his voyage had been performed, had given the landlord due information.

Truth, astonished and confounded, asked to see the landlord. His whole possessions were confined to a well-supplied wardrobe, furnished by the thoughtful benevolence of his late friends, and a few valuables forced upon him as tokens of esteem from the same source.

The landlord was a gentlemanly and generous man; but impositions upon the better qualities of our nature are too frequently perpetrated upon his peculiar class, not to create suspicions in the breasts of the most noble of them of intentional wrong and deception. He listened to Truth's explanation of his finances, half convinced of the facts by the truthful and earnest manner of the speaker, and half incredulous at the simplicity which he could not understand. It was but justice that his claim should be cancelled, and he hesitated to suggest to one of his guest's dignity and urbanity, that it must be, or that he should retain the wardrobe and valuables as security, while he ejected the penniless intruder from the haunts, welcome only to gentlemen with well-filled purses. But the delicacy of creditors who will have their dues, does not long keep their debtor in suspense, and, in as well-chosen terms as the circumstances would admit, he informed his anxious guest of the alternative which justice to himself demanded. But he also suggested to Truth the propriety of delivering letters with which he was charged, and remarked that he doubted not but that the well-known hospitality and benevolence of the individuals, to whom these letters would give him introduction, would devise some proper method of relieving him from his present embarrassments.

"But you informed me, when I asked you for information of these gentlemen, that their residence is several hundred miles hence," remarked Truth, in a tone of inquiry.

"True," returned the landlord; "but I will advance you sufficient money to pay your expenses to reach them, and for which you can repay me when you redeem your trunk and watch."

Truth accepted the offer with thankfulness; and thus commenced his knowledge of a country where he had anticipated meeting that charity and love which regards its neighbor's weal as its own, but in which every thing demands its equivalent of value in exchange, and whose hospitality is freely extended to every man, who has—*money to pay for it.*

A FAMILIAR COLLOQUY.

"It is said Henry Clay is defeated, beyond the shadow of a doubt, and that we may expect nothing but reduction of wages, hard times, and harder work!" was the exclamation of one operative to another, as they entered their chamber after having hastily finished their evening repast.

"Do sit down, friend Susan," was the answer, "and tell me *why* we should expect all these evils merely because James Polk is elected instead of Henry Clay. But first let me kindle a fire, and fetch a basket of those nice apples which were sent me all the way from Vermont; with these extra comforts before us, we shall be better prepared to listen to the evils sounding in the distance."

"Oh! yes," replied Susan, "enjoy all the comforts you can grasp now, for perchance the prediction may not be untrue, and then, whatever of 'comforts extra' you get will be at the expense of a greater exertion, and more wearisome hours; or perhaps we may be obliged to renounce our seats in church, which, as a young lady remarked to me to-day, already cost more than one month's wages out of twelve."

"Going to church is an advantage I hope not to be obliged to relinquish, were it to take a larger proportion of my wages than it now does," said her friend, as she disappeared from the room.

"Neither should I be willing to abandon going to church, but if our means are cut short, our expenses must be also; I can see no alternative unless our ministers consent to live in a less expensive manner, and thereby diminish our pew-tax," murmured Susan, as she sat with her eyes fixed upon the fire.

"Now don't form plans at present, for curtailing expenses," said her room-associate, hearing the last few words as she entered the room; "we have not one enjoyment or convenience with which we can dispense, nor to which our protracted toil does not fully entitle us; if any of mine are abridged, I shall hie to that precious old homestead of mine; yes, to the very soil which brought forth these apples," continued she, placing the dark red fruit before the gratifying yellow blaze she had lighted upon the hearth.

"Not only very wise, but truly agreeable is the course which you prefer to take if you get disappointed with your employment here; if all had so 'precious an old homestead' to which to flee, the cry of reduction and hard times would not produce a distressing thought. You are aware tha

the present protective tariff on a portion of foreign goods, is said to be imposed chiefly for the benefit of manufacturers; that it is opposed to the policy of the party which has lately obtained the ascendancy; consequently its removal will diminish the profits of our employers, and result in a reduction of our wages, and in the increase of our portion of labor."

"We know, Susan, that the latter is impossible—yes, *absolutely* impossible, unless they can provide us with another pair of hands, together with a little more health and sinew; as to the former, I am not conversant enough with the politics of the day to give an opinion. We are all inclined to be selfish—to wish for that course which will result in our own immediate prosperity; but I am sufficiently patriotic to-night to hope that some scheme may be adopted which will increase our prosperity as a nation."

"Well, my disinterested friend, as we, New England operatives, compose a part of the nation, and as not only our prosperity, but our *living* is in danger of being wrecked, suppose we send a petition to the legislature of the United States, *not* to have the duties removed."

"But, Susan, were the tariff allowed to remain, I can't see that we should be more secure, unless this factory-building spirit should stop where it is, and that would not be until the profits were divided among so large a number of manufacturers as to be no longer an inducement to the business. Really, I don't think we have any reason to look for a lower price of labor here, whatever be the plan adopted in politics. Those who have wealth are not more independent of us, than we are of them. If they wish for the benefit of our industry and strength, they must give us, in exchange for it, a living, even if it be at the cost of a few of their luxuries. Dear Susan, trouble yourself no more about the tariff, and all that sort of thing; recollect that health and industry are our security for a livelihood; if these can't procure it for us by toiling twelve hours out of twenty-four in a factory, we will try something else; perhaps test the utility of some of Fourier's propositions. Now, Susan, please amuse yourself the best way you can, while I, for the want of something better, scribble 'the sum and substance' of our evening's conversation for the Improvement Circle, to-morrow evening.

E. J.

APPEAL FOR THE OFFERING.

WHY do we hear the just complaint that a majority of the mill girls in Lowell do not contribute to the support, or evince any interest in the welfare of *their* Offering? So *strange* is the problem, that, with all the credulity mother Nature has bestowed upon me, I could not believe it, were it not daily demonstrated. As an apology for not patronizing the Offering, we frequently hear it said, that it is deceptive, that it does not give correct impressions of our situation, employment, and so forth. Doubtless those who make these remarks are sincere and honest, but they forget that we do not all see through the same eyes; that we have different feelings, tastes and modes of thinking, and hence different individuals might relate their trials and enjoyments, and not coincide, though each aimed to be truthful. Well has the poet said,

"It is the soul's prerogative, its fate,
To change all outward things, to its own state ;
If right within, then all without is well,
If wrong, we make of all around a hell."

Not that "all without" is as we could wish. We have our trials, but what situation is free from them ; and could each have the power to remodel the "without," according to their own ideas of what would be best, it is a question whether order would not be converted into confusion. Those who are so *wordy* in disclaiming against the dressing of truth in the Offering, have no hesitation in patronizing the Lady's Book, Lady's Companion, and like "literary sugar-plums." But are they consistent? Do similar publications represent life, at large, as it is, any more correctly, than the Offering does life in the mills? No one can think they do, and still how much of the "filthy lucre" is annually expended among us, for such publications, and how empty is the treasury of the Offering! If there were no other subscribers, "factory girls" alone should sustain their own publication. Has it not done more than any other one thing, or, in fact, all combined, to dispel that wide-spread prejudice, which has hitherto existed in the community in regard to our class—a prejudice which we have all felt, and some of us keenly too. None of us esteem our reputation valueless, and Justice says, "Pay what you owe ;" Selfishness echoes back, "Support your Offering."

Many think that because *they* do not contribute to its pages, it is none of theirs—that it belongs to the few and not the many, but it is not so. True, all cannot be *editors*, nor is it necessary, nor have all of us the ability to contribute to its pages, but *we have* the ability to do something, and that something we are under obligations to do. But shall I say that

"Base envy," that "withers at another's joy,
And hates that excellence it cannot reach,"

is here among us? Humiliating is the thought, but "'tis true nevertheless." We will, however, pass them by, for,

"They number few, their souls are small,
And reason folly to them all."

I would merely suggest, that *if they are* more capable of taking the direction of the Offering than those who have hitherto guided it, if they will prove it by *deeds* as well as *words*, we will have more confidence in their clamor. I never have had the honor of contributing to the pages of the Offering, but I would not withhold the meed of praise from those who so richly deserve it. They have my gratitude and sympathy too, for well do I know that their pathway has not been unobstructed, nor have they gathered only flowers. For one, I confess I am heartily ashamed, that the report must go abroad that we manifest no more interest in the success of this, our unpretending sheet. It will have more weight, as it should, in proving our want of intelligence and worth, than all other *facts* which could be made known. Have we not sufficient energy to make the Offering what it should be, and might be, by a very little effort on the part of every one?—not to benefit others, but in justice to ourselves. I would not lightly esteem newspaper literature, nor, if I was able, dissuade any one from aiding in sustaining valuable publications, but I would have the Offering *first* on *our* list, *first* in our hearts, and the strongest magnet to attract the contents of our purses.

R. H.

A PANACEA FOR SOCIAL EVILS.

THE sage, the philosopher, and the philanthropist of every age, have sought to ameliorate the condition of suffering humanity. Society exists, and with it, or rather upon it, seem entailed pain, care, want, and desires never gratified. And, with the desire for happiness, there also exists in every mind a wish to escape physical suffering. To improve the condition of the sick and maimed, the benevolent have erected hospitals and asylums. To give security to the well disposed, and to punish the vicious, our body politic have erected prisons and penitentiaries. We have houses of Refuge and Magdalen Asylums for those who would return to the path of right. And yet, with all, our streets are still the asylums for the cold and hungry. Still there are those who are grateful for "cold victuals," and "old clothes." Still the wretched and miserable surround us; those for whom no provisions are made; those whose souls must be capacious indeed (if the theory of some ancient philosopher be true) to fill the empty prison-house of their stomachs; those whose tattered garments advertise the forms they cover "to let."

Must this continue? In the advancement of civilization, the fine arts, and science, has nothing been discovered to remedy the evils we deplore? To give to the destitute food and clothing? Perhaps it may not be. Still, would it not be well, if we could not give them the real, to give them the semblance? Let the wretched, at least, bask in the smiles of imagination; and let them be *willed* to eat and be warm. Instead of soup-houses and poor-houses, let the wise administrators of our laws engage some willing well-clad and well-fed Mesmeric Professor to exercise his skill, and will, for the benefit of the destitute. Let him *will* the hungry to revel in feasts, and picture to their imagination their own wishes. Let the sad be made glad, and rejoice in the *belief* that they are happy. And let the cold, influenced by his compelling power, wander beneath green bowers, and fragrant shades, in sunny climes.

True; this may sustain the animal functions; but will it not be as well to let the machinery of the body wear out while the only consciousness is of repose or bliss, as for the miserable to die with the sufferings of both mind and body? Unacquainted as I am with Mesmeric experiments, I am unable to suggest how many subjects one professor could keep in a state of somnambulism at one time. Yet, I think that were computation made, and the experiments I have suggested put in execution, it would be found, that upon no other principle could one man make so many fellow-beings happy. As economy and prudence are virtues first appreciated, this manner of supplying the wants of those who suffer would cost less to our body politic than the inadequate ones now in operation. Also, the vicious might be *willed* to be good and virtuous; and, perchance, the conscientious Mesmeric professor in the pulpit, might *will* their congregations to feel and act as Christians, as well as to profess so to be. And when disease has prostrated the body, and the soul shrinks from entering into that state of existence where care, pain and parting cease to be, then let visions of faith and confidence in the GREAT LOVE cheer the fainting spirit onward to its eternal home.

JESSIE.

EDITORIAL.

THE AIM OF THE OFFERING. What is the aim of the Offering? is a question frequently asked, and one which we have often answered. But, as the commencement of each volume brings us in communion with a large proportion of new patrons, we trust our old friends will not be impatient if they then meet with a "twice-told tale."

"What the object is, which we would fain accomplish, need not be particularly specified. All our readers are aware of the prejudice, which has long existed, against the manufacturing females of New England—a prejudice which, in this country, should never have been harbored against any division of the laboring population, and that many circumstances, and the exertions of many different classes of individuals, had contributed to strengthen this prejudice. We were not surprised that, when *THE OFFERING* first appeared, so many were astonished; but we were surprised that so many should, for so long a time, withhold from it their confidence. In spite of these, however, *THE OFFERING* has done much good. The involuntary blush does not so often tinge the faces of our operatives, when mingling with strangers, as when they claimed no place amid the worthy, and the educated."

Thus we wrote more than two years since, and, as then stated, our aim was to remove unjust prejudice—to prove that the female operatives of Lowell were, as a class, virtuous and intelligent; this could not be done more effectually than by publishing not only their own opinions relative to their peculiar occupation, but also their thoughts and feelings with regard to life in any of its real or imagined aspects. Their little essays and stories may not be, intrinsically, of any great value or interest, but, as indications of the mental and moral condition of a large class of females, they cannot be without a meaning. The Offering may be looked upon as a sort of intellectual barometer, though the complaint has been made that it always tells of "fair weather."

The charge of deception is not a light one, but we trust it is unmerited—wilfully we certainly have not erred. If we have pictured the fair side, it was because, to us, that *overshadowed* the darker phase. And is not that a wise philosophy which

"Seeing only what is fair,
"Sipping only what is sweet,
"Still dost mock at fate and care,
"Leaves the chaff and takes the wheat."

We have published all the fault-finding communications which have been sent us, have expressed our readiness to receive more, and have even desired our contributors to write freely their own views of the wants, evils and temptations to which they and their companions are subjected, hoping always that subjects like these would be treated by females with good temper and good taste. If there is now just cause for complaint, it must be because the writers for the Offering see through magic glasses, which convert the desert to a paradise—or perhaps, while faint and perishing, they revel in the ecstasies of gay delirium.

But it may be asked, is it right that the contributors to a factory magazine should be regarded as representatives of a factory population? We reply, Yes, with as much justice as any other writers are regarded as representatives of their people or age. We readily admit that they are but a very minute proportion, but writers are usually in the minority. An eminent school teacher said to us recently, "In a school of one hundred and fifty pupils, I seldom found more than six or eight who enjoyed that highest intellectual effort, composition." And, allowing all other things to be equal among us, the number of those who would appreciate this enjoyment would be diminished by physical fatigue. Then, again, it is not true that the writers are always the most intellectual. Excellent judgment, fine critical taste, strong powers of connected thought and acute analysis, frequently exist without a love for composition. Then, again, we do not receive the contributions of all the factory operatives here who write for the public. We know of many who can and actually do write for other publications than the Offering. In truth, our contributors, taken as a class, have been the simple and unpretending among their associates. When our magazine was first published, its writers were only known through their fictitious signatures, and hundreds were fixed upon, in some cases, as the real author

of some particular article, while the true one remained unsuspected. Indeed, it was considered astonishing that this, that or the other young lady who had been so prominent upon her corporation for intelligence, and so forth, should not consider herself capable of writing a single article for the Offering.

But if by our writings we have misled any, and caused our distant readers to believe that Lowell is an Eden, and that we are all—not Eves, nor angels, but—Sapphos, then have we been deceptive in the impression created. Yet no error of this kind can more than offset the false impressions of a darker hue that have long existed.

Still, may we not guard against false impressions of any kind? We do not think our local stories have idealized factory life so much as fiction generally does its subject. We have had but few of these stories. One of our contributors, when asked to furnish something of this sort, replied, "I never think of factory life as distinct from other life, and of factory operatives as distinct from other laborers. We are just like others. We come here and stay awhile, and then go back to the little world, or little out-of-the-world, from which we came. Our hopes, fears, joys and sorrows are those to which all are subject."

There are, however, evils and temptations peculiar to our life, and causes for fear of a darker future. Why have we not treated of them? When we first wrote for "the august public," it was sufficient for us that we wrote. The choice of a subject, and that a familiar one, must be our own. We were not adequate to a judicious treatment of philosophical subjects, and, in truth, thought little about them. We could have written of some petty grievances, but these are not the ones which are of paramount importance even to us. The great evils from which we suffer, are those which press upon the laborer in all other occupations, in this and every other country. The great thoughts upon this subject which, within a few years, have been promulgated, and rapidly circulated, were at first very new to us. Some views we could quickly apprehend, but how to reconcile the constitutional rights of the capitalist, and the natural rights of the operative, was more difficult. With time our powers of vision increased, but Alps on Alps would still arise; though our horizon receded, its limit was still a dim distant expanse.

But some things we know, and "know certain," and some neglected subjects shall yet receive our attention. Our aim is the good of our fellow-operatives in particular, and of all operatives in general; and it gratifies us exceedingly to learn that *THE LOWELL OFFERING* is creating deep interest in other countries, and that those who hail it the most joyfully are the reformers and philanthropists; those whose thoughts and lives are dedicated to the welfare of their fellow-men. We have incidentally advocated the doctrines of the dignity of labor, the benefits of universal education, the elevating tendencies of republican institutions, and the idea that respectability is to be conferred upon our employments, not received from them. We have incidentally done this; we can also do it directly, and, in future numbers, will treat of the topics not yet discussed.

We insert in this number two articles not written by females at present employed in the mills, besides our own contribution. But all are from those who still call themselves "factory girls," and none but such will continue on our contributing list. One is "The Improvement Circle," and this is of interest as giving an account of an intellectual effort which has not been generally known. The honor of establishing this circle has been conferred upon him who revived and enlarged it. It should now be transferred to her who originated it, and who is, at present, one of the publishers of the Offering. We were not of that noble little band. When they met, and revealed to each other the bright webs of thought which—not in their leisure, but—in their working hours they had woven, we were then eagerly and perseveringly endeavoring to initiate ourselves into the mysteries of weaving cotton. We were in the regions of stern reality, not of bright romance—the actual, not the fanciful, then claimed our every thought. But, honor to that little band! and to the two with whose intellectual labors we are herein favored.

The other writer is the author of the "Appeal," or remonstrance, addressed to the females of Lowell. We are sorry that there is any reason for an article of this kind, and can hardly allow ourselves to believe them influenced by the motives sometimes insinuated. There are many reasons which influence the different characters among them. Some are too penurious; some, in reality, too poor; some honest in their belief that a work, which does not make the subject of wages a prominent one, unfaithful to them—untrue to their interests. And many, who look upon the Offering in its true light, care little for its aim.

"What," they say, with true Yankee independence, "do we care for the prejudices of the distant and ignorant. We know what we think of ourselves, we know what those, who do know us, think of us, and we would not give a copper to enlighten those who are stupidly, if not wilfully, ignorant of our true characters."

Where there is distrust, envy, or ill-will excited, we can only trust that it will be removed by the very instrument which has called it forth. Our efforts shall still be to raise them to us, rather than to sink ourselves back to them. Frankly admitting that there is much in Lowell which is not as it should be, that there are many here who are not models of perfection in female character, we still conscientiously send the Offering forth, for one year more, as the true symbol of a moral and intellectual level, to which many are unwilling to allow that, as a class, we have attained. That this may be an ascending plane long after our little magazine shall have ceased its efforts, is the sincere wish of its editor. H. F.

CHRISTMAS AND NEW-YEAR'S GIFTS.

From Powers & Bagley we have received *THE LAUREL WREATH*, a collection of prose and poetry, very neatly printed and gilded, and bound in a beautiful little cover. It is entirely written by New England ladies, natives too of the Old Bay State; and this, to some, may give it a preference over the many pretty little works which claim the attention of Christmas and New-Year donors. The articles are mostly new to the public, and from a hasty glance at them, we should think there was nothing in the book which could offend the most fastidious taste. Published by *T. P. Collins, Philadelphia*.

From the same bookstore we have also *KRISS KRINGLE'S CHRISTMAS TREE*, one of the most beautiful and appropriate gift books for children which we have ever seen. The cover, paper, printing and embellishments are exceedingly handsome, and the stories, in prose and verse, must find favor in the eyes and hearts of all little boys and girls, excepting those who cannot love a book. The title-page tells us that it is published by *E. Ferrett & Co., Philadelphia*, but the envelope bears the name of *B. Walker, Phil.*, as publisher. If any good little boys and girls are forgotten on the first day of Christmas, we hope this may be obtained for them as a Twelfth-Day Gift.

Judging from the little pile, sent in to us, no one in Lowell has a better assortment of gift books than J. Judson Judkins, No. 29 (formerly 18) Central street.

THE YOUNG MAN, published by N. L. Dayton, of this city, is an excellent little work. We know not who is the author or compiler, but, if he accomplishes all the good at which he aims, he will be a benefactor to that class of our population who sadly need his admonitions.

LIGHTS AND SHADOWS OF DOMESTIC LIFE, or Home the Centre of the Affections, is also a very good little book, and appropriate as a family gift. Published by *Ch. C. P. Moody, Boston*.

THE MOURNER'S CHAPLET, an offering of sympathy for bereaved friends, is a selection from American poets, by *John Keese*; and the name of this editor is a sufficient guaranty that his fine taste, and extensive knowledge of all American poetry, must render this a valuable and useful little gift to the bereaved, and sad in heart. Published in Boston, by *Gould, Kendall & Lincoln*.

THE ALBUM OF LOVE is a collection of poems, and extracts from poems, similar to the *Poetry of Love*, noticed some months since in *The Offering*.

"Love rules the court, the camp, the grave,
"And men below, and saints above,"

is the motto of the book; and it is natural to suppose that, where this is the inspiring theme, the poems must be gems. Published by *Isaac Tompkins, Boston*.

WISH YOU HAPPY NEW YEAR is a very pretty little book for children. With its gilded leaves, silk binding, and large type, it must be a grateful addition to any child's library; and all the above-mentioned books have the extraneous merit of beautiful printing and binding.